



*United States Bankruptcy Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
Office of the Clerk*

INTRODUCTION TO CASE MANAGEMENT/ ELECTRONIC CASE FILES(CM/ECF)

What is the case management/electronic case files project?

ANSWER: CM/ECF will replace the existing case management system in the federal courts with a new case management system based on current technology. In addition to providing the courts with updated tools for managing their cases, this new system will enable the courts to create electronic case files and implement electronic filing over the Internet.

What are the benefits and features of using CM/ECF?

ANSWER: There are a number of significant benefits and features:
Full case information, including the docket and the filed documents are readily available to judges, chambers staff, and clerk's office personnel simultaneously without having to retrieve case records from the file room. These court users can also access this information from locations other than the courthouse, via the Internet.

At the court's option, registered attorneys can file and retrieve court documents 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Attorneys, parties and the general public are able to view case records using the Internet. This includes the ability to view the full text of all filed documents (subject to any limitations the court might impose).

Attorneys can receive notices electronically in ECF cases; this eliminates the costs to both the court and attorneys of handling and mailing paper notices, and greatly speeds delivery.

Since CM/ECF uses Internet standard software, the out of pocket cost of participation for attorneys is typically very low.

How will signature of documents be handled for documents filed electronically?

ANSWER: At present, this is a matter for local court rule or order. Most prototype courts are currently treating use of an attorney's unique system log-in and password as a signature. Most of the prototype courts require that attorneys retain copies of critical paper documents, such as affidavits or bankruptcy petitions, containing original signatures of parties. Issues relating to authentication and verification of signatures are presently the subject of considerable debate in many areas of electronic commerce. The long-range solutions are still evolving.